

KentuckyHistoricalSociety

Military Notification of Death

Lesson plan author: Chase Goodman, Allen Central High School

Intended grade level: 11th

Number of students: varies

Major content: U.S. History

Unit: applicable to various

Lesson length: 50 minutes (1 class period)

Context

- Students will learn how from past to present the United States military has contacted the family of the death of a soldier.
- Student's prior knowledge of the subject will come from their exposure to media, movies, or personal experience.
- Content is relevant due to its connection to real life experience due to the involvement of the United States military in recent and current military conflicts.

Learning Objective(s)

- **Skills:** Students will analyze and source primary documents from various conflicts in United States history.
- **Knowledge:** Students will understand the importance of empathy and sympathy when dealing with the delicate matter of notification of death in the United States military.

Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

SS-H-GC-S-5

Students will analyze and synthesize a variety of information from print and non-print sources (books, documents, articles, interviews, Internet, film, media) to research issues, perspectives and solutions to problems.

CLASS OF SERVICE <small>This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol shown or preceding the address.</small>	<h1 style="margin: 0;">WESTERN UNION</h1> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT</p>	SYMBOLS DL = Day Letter NL = Night Letter LC = Deferred Cable MLY = Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram
<small>The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.</small>		
<p style="text-align: center;">CTA004 SPS548 PA632</p> <p style="text-align: center;">P. WA455 LONG GOVT PD=WUX WASHINGTON DC 13 841P=</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MR AND MRS OTIS BURNS=</p> <p style="text-align: center;">400 EWING ST FRANKFORT KY=</p> <p style="text-align: center;">140013Z DEEPLY REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON PRIVATE FIRST CLASS CHADWICK O BURNS USMC WAS KILLED IN ACTION 8 AUGUST 1950 IN THE KOREAN AREA IN THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS DUTY AND SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY. NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT PRESENT REGARDING DISPOSITION OF REMAINS. TEMPORARY BURIAL IN LOCALITY WHERE DEATH OCCURRED PROBABLE. YOU WILL BE PROMPTLY FURNISHED ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RECEIVED. PLEASE ACCEPT MY HEARTFELT SYMPATHY. LETTER FOLLOWS=</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C B CATES GENERAL USMC COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS=</p>		

Kentucky Historical Society

CLASS OF SERVICE <small>This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.</small>	<h1 style="margin: 0;">WESTERN UNION</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">TELEGRAM</h2> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">®</p>	SYMBOLS DL = Day Letter NL = Night Letter LT = International Letter Telegram
<small>The filing time shown in the date line on domestic telegrams is LOCAL TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is LOCAL TIME at point of destination.</small>		
<p style="text-align: center;">727A EST FEB 14 68 CTA175</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CT CT WA186 XV GOVT PD WASHINGTON DC 14 559A EST</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MR AND MRS ROBERT W HUGHES, DONT PHONE DONT DELIVER BTWEEN 10PM AND 6 AM <u>REPORT DELIVERY</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">321 ILLINOIS AVE WESTERVILLE OHIO</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS ASKED ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR SON, SPECIALIST FOUR ROBERT L. HUGHES DIED IN VIETNAM ON 12 FEBRUARY 1968, FROM WOUND RECEIVED WHILE ON COMBAT OPERATION WHEN HIT BY HOSTILE SMALL ARMS FIRE.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PLEASE ACCEPT MY DEEPEST SYMPATHY. THIS CONFIRMS PERSONAL NOTIFICATION MADE BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">KENNETH G WICKHAM MAJOR GENERAL USA F59 THE ADJUTANT GENERAL (17).</p>		

SF1201(R2-65)

CLASS OF SERVICE	WESTERN UNION	1204	SYMBOLS
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless as denoted by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT		DL = Day Letter NT = Night Telegram LC = Deferred Cable MT = Cable Mails Letter Rg = Radiogram
No filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.			
2	58 Government	Washington, DC	3-10-48 10:22 PM
Mrs. Mary C. Bobbitt Drakesboro, Ky.			
<p>The Secretary of War asks that I assure you of his deep sympathy in the loss of your son Staff Sergeant Chester L. Bobbitt. Report received states he died twenty seventh February in Germany as result of wounds received in action. Further report states he had returned to duty three February from previous reported wound confirming letter follows.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">J.A. Ulio, The Adjutant General</p>			
THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE			

OBITUARIES.

An Extract.

WINCHESTER, VA., June 16th, 1863.

Dear Father and Mother:

I fear the news contained in this, will almost break your hearts, but I hope you will bear it with christian fortitude, when you learn that your dear boy in passing from this world, was cheered by the prospects of a better one, and desired me, and you all, to meet him in Heaven.

Frank was wounded Saturday, June 12th, near Bunker Hill. I helped to carry him from the field on a blanket, and was with him constantly till he died, just after 12 o'clock Sunday night. He spent most of the time in calm, fervent prayer, and talking of the dear ones at home.

* * * *

He fell by the side of his Colonel, at the head of our victorious columns, and said, "I die in a holy cause—in defence of our liberties and homes." * * * I have strong reason to believe his brave spirit is in Heaven.—May God sustain us all. Oh, how much I miss him, and how much I need a letter just now from home!

JOS. D. ALDERSON.

FRANK M. ALDERSON was 19 years old, attached to Co. A, 16th Va Cavalry, and son of Dr. Alderson, of this county.

Instructions

1. Bell Ringer, 10 minutes:

Students will complete a writing assignment. Allow 5 minutes for writing and 5 minutes for discussion. The teacher will post these questions:

- Do you know anyone who has lost a family member while serving in the U.S. military?
- If so how where they notified of the death? If you don't know someone, how do you think they were notified?
- If you had to notify a family of a loved ones death how would you choose to do it?

2. Group Work, 30 minutes:

Allow 15 minutes for answers and 15 minutes for class discussion. The teacher will print the above primary source documents and blacken out all relevant information that might source the material but leaving enough for clues. Teacher will pass out documents to each group along with a handout containing these questions:

- Who wrote/produced/compiled this document?
- From what war or conflict do you think they come from?
- Do you think this source is authentic? Why?
- Do you think this was the only notification the families received?
- Do you think the notifications are too formal? Should they be more sympathetic? Why?
- What do you personally take away from these documents (i.e sympathy, empathy, and understanding)?

3. Exit Slip, 10 minutes:

Allow 5 minutes for writing and 5 minutes for discussion. Students will answer the following questions:

- Which document was the most interesting to you? Why?
- Do you agree with the way the United States military notified families of a soldier's death in the past?
- Why was this lesson important?

Assessment Plan

Objective / Assessment Organizer			
Objective Number	Type of Assessment	Description of Assessment	Adaptations and/or Accommodations
Objective 1	Formative	Class discussion	Extra time for students with IEP's and 504 plans, grouping with strong leaders, itinerant teacher
Objective 2	Summative	Exit slip	Extra time for students with IEP's and 504 plans, grouping with strong leaders, itinerant teacher

Impact

- Students will understand how the United States military has evolved over time in the manner in which it handles death notifications. Students will be empathetic to the families of fallen soldiers. Students will understand the devastating effects of war and the toll it takes on individuals, their families, and friends.

Refinement/Lesson Extension

- Teacher will refine the lesson as needed during implementation. This lesson can be used when covering major units such as: Civil War, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, or the engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq.